



STATE OF NEVADA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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DRAFT MINUTES
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Monday, November 2, 2009
Fallon Convention Center
100 Campus Way, Fallon, NV 89406

The Nevada State Conservation Commission held a meeting on Monday, November 2, 2009 at 1:00PM in Fallon, NV. The meeting was held at Fallon Convention Center, 100 Campus Way, Fallon, NV 89406.

The State Conservation Commission considered and acted on the following items on July 28, 2009.

Board Members Present: Joe Sicking, Paradise/Sonoma CD; Vance Vesco, Big Meadow CD; Chris Freeman, Nevada Tahoe CD; Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD; Donna Lamm, Southern Nye County CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda CD; Joseph Fortier, CD of Southern Nevada; Dr. Rangesan Narayanan, UNR College of Agriculture; Ed Foster, NV Dept. of Agriculture.

Others Present: Jim Lawrence, Acting Administrator, NV Division of Conservation Districts; Kelly McGowan, NV Division of CDs; Sandi Gotta, NV Division of CDs; Brandi Re', NV Division of CDs; Bruce Peterson, NRCS; Kerry Benson, Deputy Attorney General, NV Attorney General's Office; William Elder, USDA-NRCS; Ray Ledgerwood, Board Works by Ledgerwood.

I. CALL TO ORDER- Quorum established.

A. Vice Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Introductions were made of those present.

B. Congratulations were offered to Commissioner Rieman and Commissioner Vesco on their reappointments to the Commission. Commissioner Fortier and Commission Wallace were welcomed to their first commission meeting.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA - *ACTION*

A. The agenda was approved as written via a motion to approve by Commissioner Freeman, seconded by Commissioner Lamm, motion passed.

III. REVIEW, AMENDMENT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES - *ACTION*

A. *Approval of Minutes from July 28, 2009:* A motion to approve the minutes as written by Commissioner Freeman, seconded by Commissioner Foster, motion passed.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. *Three minute time limit per person.* There were no public comments.

V. ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS - *ACTION*

A. **Election of Commission Chairman**

1. Vice Chairman Sicking opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Freeman nominated Commissioner Sicking for Chairman. Commissioner Vesco seconded the nomination. No other nominations were given by the commission. Nomination passed unanimously.

B. **Election of Commission Vice-Chairman**

1. Chairman Sicking opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Rieman nominated Commissioner Vesco. Commissioner Lamm seconded the nomination. No other nominations were given by the commission. Nomination passed unanimously.

VI. DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE NEVADA

CONSERVATION COMMISSION- *ACTION*: The Commission developed a 5-year Strategic Plan with partner input including: Goals, Timelines and Actions for 2009-2013 – *Ray Ledgerwood, Board Works by Ledgerwood* – session began at 1:30PM and concluded at 5:30PM. See attached Strategic Planning Work Session Notes.

VII. REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION – Commission reconvened at 5:40PM.

A. **Status of the Division of Conservation Districts**

1. ***General – Jim Lawrence –***

- a. Mr. Lawrence noted that the division has a couple hundred dollars budgeted per month to allow Kelly and Sandi to get out to meet with the various districts after previous budget cuts. This travel category also included a travel budget that included travel for commission meetings. With various cuts in other budget areas, the agency is currently living within its means.
- b. Mr. Lawrence reported on a meeting being held today in Incline Village of the Legislative Committee which provides oversight on Lake Tahoe activities. The Executive Director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency reported they are expecting federal legislation to be introduced; being co-sponsored by Senators Reid and Ensign for continued federal funding of environmental improvement projects. They are looking to receive \$415 million over the next 8 years. Jim wanted to highlight this, as he sees that the partnerships (including the Nevada Tahoe Conservation District) in Lake Tahoe have been successful by being able to clearly articulate the lakes program needs and goals. Key funding programs that will benefit include fuels reduction, storm water, lake clarity projects, fighting aquatic invasive species, and watershed restoration.

2. ***Conservation Districts Meeting Logs – Kelly McGowan & Sandi Gotta***

- a. Kelly reviewed the measurement indicator reports for FY2009/2010 projections. The division ended up pretty close to being on target on almost every item. Some were exceeded and a few did not quite meet the goals. Obtaining outside funding for some of the projects has yet to happen. Kelly reported that after

reviewing FY2010, 1st quarter and updates to the final financial reports the ratio is 22:1. This ratio represents a match to state funding that conservation districts have generated. All the districts appear to be in good standing. Staff has not met with very many of the districts as they are being conservative with the in-state travel budget; however, visits have been based on requests by districts. It appears if the budget holds, the goal of meeting with 18 of the 28 districts will be obtainable. No board trainings have been held yet. The staff has developed and delivered two information/educational brochures out to some of the districts. To date, non-state funding generated by the staff is at zero. Kelly is still waiting to hear back on the proposal he submitted through the Fish and Wildlife Service through the terminal lakes funding for \$150,000, which will have to be used in the Walker River basin. He is hoping to hear back on the funding within the next few months. National meetings are limited due to budget cuts with a total of 2 out-of-state conferences. Kelly attended the NASCA national conference and Sandi will be attending the NACD national conference. All staff will attend the NvACD annual meeting and Kelly and Sandi will try to attend the NvACD area meetings. The division is behind on attending multi-agency meetings, but is participating through teleconference meetings. The unmet goals of the division are dictated by the budget and the division being conservative with their funding.

- b. Kelly reviewed the district's financial reports. Kelly reported a significant increase in match between the districts draft financial reports and final financial reports from 20:1 to 22:1.
- c. Report logs – Sandi reported that all of the conservation districts submitted their final financial reports by the deadline. Sandi made note to the commission of the format changes to restructure the minute and agenda log to make it easier for staff review and tracking to ensure we receive minutes for each agenda received. This allows for a clear cross check for division staff and district staff.
- d. District training program review – Kelly reviewed the new guide created to assist the division in identifying areas of district training. Highlighted in green: Items covered well or reviewed annually; Highlighted in yellow: Items covered but reviewed occasionally or as needed; Highlighted in red: areas not covered or infrequently covered due to budget restraints. Staff asked the commission to review the guideline document to help establish training needs of the districts and modify the modules of interest; providing input and suggestions that would suit the districts best.

3. *General/Correspondence – Kelly McGowan & Sandi Gotta*

- a. Sandi reported the staff received and requested reports from the districts of what projects they did with the AB629 funding. We began compiling a report of those projects and realized that while some districts reported, many did not. Once the annual reports were

received it was clear that more projects had been completed but had not been included in the original request. Bob Conrad with the Director's office has offered to assist the division with creating a booklet highlighting the achievements of the districts. A "Who, What and Why" of conservation districts in Nevada. A request for photos has been put out to some of the districts of what work was done as high quality, high resolution photos are required. This piece will be developed to be more timeless and will not be limited to AB629 projects and will highlight all of the districts instead of a selected few. The division has some funds from NvACD that were donated specifically for education and publication purposes. It may also be possible to get 319 funding. The staff will only need funds for publishing as the project will be developed in-house. Jim added that the document will provide outreach capabilities as a marketing tool.

VIII. REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION

A. *Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Allen Biaggi* – No Report, Allen sent his regrets that he was unable to attend the meeting.

B. *Department of Agriculture – Ed Foster* –

1. On Wednesday, November 3, 2009 the Dept. of Agriculture will have a building dedication of the 37,000 square foot building. The building is being dedicated to John and Roberta Marvel. The building currently has 8 state of the art labs up and running, and was recently certified by the Center for Disease Control. It is the fastest lab in the nation in terms of processing.
2. There has been a complete turnover of the state agriculture board within the past 17 months. There is a sense of renewal and fresh ideas with a clear focus. They are also living within their current funding and getting by.
3. Commerce is growing for people with warehouses for lease of government licensure leasing certificates for exports whether for coffee, grains, soy, etc.
4. Mr. Foster reported on staffing changes within the department. They lost four people as of July 1, 2009 and now Ed is managing the Las Vegas office also. Tina Mudd has been rehired and now they have two great employees heading the weed program.
5. Dr. Rang commented on SB110 and its efforts to revise the fine schedule for weeds. Ed detailed that it allows for limited abatement. Enforcement letters of intent have been sent and they have had a positive response, however, they are a regulatory agency not an enforcement agency with a primary focus to preserve and protect.
6. Kelly suggested the next SCC meeting be held at the new Agriculture Building and include a tour of the facility. Mr. Foster said he would coordinate and provide a date that the facility will be available to facilitate the meeting and will coordinate with the division.

C. *UNR College of Agriculture – Dr. Rangesan Narayanan* –

1. Dr. Rang updated the commission on Dean Thawley's current medical condition. He is still on medical leave and is recovering well. He is projected to return early March 2010. Dean Thawley is still coming into the office once or twice a week to keep updated, but not in any official capacity.

2. The University is focused on renewable resources and is taking the lead in bio-fuels research, funding and planning. Dr. Rang announced that Ron Pardini, Acting Dean, will be giving a presentation at the NvACD meeting on partnerships with conservation districts and highlighting the pilot program.
3. Pam Griswold of NvACD has been working with them closely with Great Basin Environmental Association who received \$200,000 in initial funding. Pam will be assisting in the planning of a conference with conservation districts slated for next fall with congressional delegation.
4. University is operating on an 18% budget cut. No new cuts thus far.

D. *NRCS – Bruce Peterson –*

1. Mr. Peterson informed the commission of staffing changes. Corey Lytle who was previously with the Caliente office has been hired as the district conservationist for Ely. Denise Atkins is leaving Winnemucca to relocate to Idaho. They will be recruiting for the Winnemucca position and looking to fill the vacancy in the near future. Bill Dollarhide is retiring January 3, 2010 and they will be recruiting for his position.
2. President Obama signed the budget last week and it is expected to be the same as last year's budget of \$700 million. Last year they entered into 100 contracts and still left some money on the table they could not obligate to Nevada. The funds went to other states and they will be working hard this year to eliminate that from happening again.
3. The plant material research facility in Fallon is up and running in cooperation with University of Nevada Reno. They are currently purchasing equipment and were able to complete the greenhouse structure.
4. EQIP. cost share assistance is 75 percent, however limited resource producers, socially disadvantage producers and historically underserved and others in particular categories are up to 90 percent. WHIP is also at 75 percent cost share.

E. *Attorney General's Office – Kerry Benson – No Report*

F. *Farm Service Agency – Gus Wegren – No Report*

G. *Nevada Association of Conservation Districts – Pam Griswold – No Report*

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. **Determination of Vya Conservation District Standing as per NRS 548.178 and as per NAC 548.110 and 548.120 – *ACTION***

1. Staff Report: Sandi reported that at the last meeting the commission had not received Vya's draft financial report; however, the division did receive a final report by the September 30 deadline. All of the required reports from Vya Conservation District were available for the commission's review to find the district in Good Standing. Staff indicated they received all of the required reports and gave a recommendation to the commission to find the district in Good Standing. Commissioner Sicking noted that on the last page of the reports, Vya requested to reinstitute the district's name to *Vya Soil and Water Conservation District* due to tax and banking requirements. Sandi indicated that the district name should not have been changed to her knowledge and that she will clarify those changes with the district's staff. Kelly stated many of the districts have run into trouble with their name being listed differently with the IRS from the legal listing of the State.

2. District/ Public Comment: No comments
3. Commission action on "Good Standing" – ***ACTION***
 - a. Commissioner Vesco made a motion to find Vya CD in Good Standing, Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. Motion passed.

B. Award \$4,200 from the Basic Operating Grants to Districts program to Vya Conservation District, if designated as eligible per NRS 548.178 and NAC 548.120 and 548.130 – *ACTION*

1. Review Vya Conservation District Budget (FY2010), Annual Work Plan (FY2010), Financial Report (FY2008), and Annual Report (FY2008). Funding amount is based upon the Final Financial Report for FY2009. Award grant to Vya Conservation District if determined to be in "Good Standing" with the Commission.
 - a. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to award Vya Conservation District their grant in the amount of \$4,200, motion seconded by Commissioner Lamm. Motion passed.

X. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Discussion and direction to updating the current Nevada State BMP Manual in regards to landscaping and landscape irrigation – Joseph Fortier ***ACTION***
 1. BMP (Best Management Practices) discussion: Commissioner Fortier would like to see a BMP developed for landscaping, irrigation, and agriculture irrigation and would like to spearhead the project. He would like to form partnerships with Cooperative Extension and the Landscape Architect Association and other national and regional organizations he is part of for irrigation. Chairman Sicking suggested seeking partnership with NRCS for the agriculture side. Commissioner Fortier stated he believes if done correctly that BMP's can be of great benefit. He will bring feedback to the commission in one year regarding urban issues, government and contractors water usage. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to allow Commissioner Fortier to research and present his findings to the commission in one year. Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion, motion passed.

XI. STAFF ITEMS – Division Staff Comments

- A. Mr. Lawrence recommended we discuss action items for the next agenda in February or March if a quorum is not present on November 4, 2009. Mr. Lawrence suggested the commission look at the strategic plan draft on the next agenda. Commissioner Fortier suggested presenting the developed strategic plan to their individual conservation districts. Mr. Lawrence requested permission from the commission to present highlights of the plan at the NvACD meeting on Wednesday, November 4, 2009. The commission agreed.

XII. COMMISSIONER ITEMS

- A. *Commissioner Lamm – So. Nye County Conservation District*
 1. Commissioner Lamm updated the commission of the tritium detected north of Beatty near Yucca Flat last week. She reported that this is the first time anything has been detected off the site. It is off the test site but still on government property as it was found on the Air Force Base. They have been

notified that it is tritium and has a short half life so it's not cause for great concern; however things are on the move. It is not naturally occurring but secondary from one of the underground blasts.

2. Commissioner Lamm is working with Amargosa Conservancy, which is a non-profit governmental organization. Last week they installed eleven piezometers in the southern end of Amargosa Valley. They are collaborating with the Department of Energy, Bureau of Land Management, National Parks System and Death Valley National Park to do water monitoring in the southern Amargosa Valley. This information will be included in the Death Valley Regional Flow Model. They are currently working on an embedded model (more detail) for the Amargosa area now. The area is downs stream from Las Vegas and in an area where they are looking to develop 100,000 acres of solar array. Commissioner Lamm will update the commission of their findings.

B. *Commission Vesco – Big Meadow Conservation District*

1. Suggested the idea of purchasing a recognition gift for Keith Whipple and Judy Currier. Staff reported that certificates of service had been created and would be presented to them at the NvACD banquet. The commission agreed they would like to get a watch or other gift with a suggested contribution from each commissioner of \$10 to \$20 for the retiring commissioners. Contributions can be given to staff and they will purchase and deliver the gifts.

C. *Commissioner Freeman – Nevada Tahoe Conservation District*

1. Commissioner Freeman updated the commission of an RC&D California Association meeting he attended in Nevada City two weeks prior. They asked the Nevada RC&D to join their association. It looks like Southern Nevada and Western Nevada will join California and Eastern Nevada will join Utah's association. The programs they are working heavily on are bio-fuels and organic crops. They are looking closely at rural development because rural development has a large chunk of funds that can be used for a variety of things including organics, bio-fuels, and covered facilities for livestock manure. Dan Kaffer and Commissioner Freeman will be holding a meeting to collaborate with the representatives from California on how Nevada can tap into rural development.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Three-minute time limit per person. No public comment.

XIV. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - *ACTION*

- A. Set meeting for the mid spring. Meeting will need to be face-to-face to review and take action on the districts budgets and annual workplans.
- B. Meeting to be held at the Dept. of Agriculture building and to include a tour of the facility.
- C. Place action items from 11/4/09 meeting to next meeting agenda.
- D. Review Strategic Plan draft.

XV. ADJOURNMENT - *ACTION*

Vice Chairman Vesco made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Lamm, meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

November 4, 2009 SCC meeting cancelled – lack of a quorum.